

## Legislature Goofs

We have never been known to be fans of the Suffolk County Legislature. We have often charged that this branch of government is inept, a duplication of effort and comprised of people who have trouble figuring out what day of the week it is.

Anybody who disagrees with this statement only has to look at the happenings of the past week. Last January, the County Executive appointed a commission to redistrict according to population, as mandated by law, and come up with new legislative districts.

The commission completed its task in the early morning hours of April 23 and submitted a final map to the county legislature on April 28. A public hearing was scheduled for May 12 in Hauppauge, and later, another was set for May 26 in Riverhead. Still another was scheduled for yesterday, when the legislature was expected to adopt a final plan.

The legislature had to work quickly in order to approve or modify the plan, in order to meet the deadlines of the political schedule.

In the typical legislative style, individual legislators fought amongst themselves, would not come to a collective decision and put off a vote on either the commission's plan or their own substitute. Their inaction and inability to function as a cohesive legislative body has brought them to a point where it appears that unless the court intervenes, there will not be time for primaries for legislative positions.

Legislators who probably will lose their seats are now hollering that their inability to come to a decision was the result of outside political forces. That's bull. The truth of the

matter is it was largely the disorganization of the legislature, its members' inability to reach a swift conclusion on anything which has caused this break down. We would like to see - in fact, it is a must - that there be primaries. Primaries are the only way the rank and file have an opportunity of repudiating or accepting the organization's choices for office. We do not believe it is constitutional for candidates solely to be selected by the nominating convention route.

The solution to this dilemma, of course, would be for an election to be held under the old legislative district guidelines. This, in itself, may not meet the mandates of the county charter, which require that new boundaries be set within six months of the release of the census figures.

The real solution to this dilemma would be for leaders of both parties to demand of the legislature that they put to a vote this November, whether to keep the legislature in its present form or return this body of government to a Board of Supervisors acting with a weighted vote.

Suffolk Life believes the political leaders here in this county have the strength, the power to bring about this vote. Whether they have the courage of their convictions and a strong enough belief in good government is another question all together.

Political leaders should not only be concerned with politics. They should be concerned with good government, and it's pretty obvious that it is impossible to get good government out of the legislature when they can't figure out the deadline for their own election. And why not?

criminals and now reward their past behavior with tax-credited inducements to hire them.

We wish someone could explain to us the logic of granting someone who has perpetuated a crime against humanity job credits over and above those who have stayed within the system and might find themselves without work or an opportunity to advance their position in life. We are living in a sick society when we reward misbehavior but penalize adherence to the rules.

Sure, there is an argument that

these people have served their sentences, paid their debts to society, and now are in need of help so they don't return to a life of crime. But we think there is something awful strange with the law that forces an employer to say to a law abiding citizen: sorry, you do not qualify for this program, you have not broken a law, you have never been convicted, you never served time in the pen, you are not economically disadvantaged enough to be helped to get ahead.

Who said crime does not pay. And why not?

## Let's Make Them Pay

This summer, motorists are not facing gas lines. The price of gas is even on its way down. There can be a variance of 10 cents per gallon between independents and national-brand gasoline.

This is the result of conservation measures taken throughout the world but very noticeable here in the U.S. At long last, the laws of supply and demand are working. Most American drivers have cut the number of miles they drive. Millions have turned in their old 10-mile-per-gallon luxury autos for compact and subcompact cars getting 15 to 40 miles per gallon. Most have also cut back on the use of electricity as well as keeping their thermostats set lower during the winter. The frustration felt by most people during these cutbacks was that as we reduced our usage, the price we paid went up, negating any individual savings.

Now the worm has turned. The major oil companies have more crude than they can process. Their storage tanks are overflowing and they are being forced to cut prices. Some are doing it legitimately at the pumps. From what we understand, other refineries are selling their product to independent distributors at substantial discount prices. The independents, in turn, are selling

petroleum to non-branded gasoline stations at discounts of 10 cents to 15 cents under the price charged by the major oil companies.

The sharpest of these independent operators are passing some of these savings on to the consumer in an attempt to build their volume of business. We strongly recommend that consumers shop carefully. Buy the cheapest gasoline you can find, particularly from non-branded independents. It's your opportunity to get back at the Seven Sisters for what they did to you during the 1970s.

We also recommend you continue, with vigor, your conservation measures of the past five years. Wherever and however you can, cut back on your consumption, eliminate unnecessary trips, keep your speeds under 55 m.p.h., keep the air conditioners turned off. Keep demanding better gas mileage from American manufacturers. Don't be lulled into complacency, for we know from past history that if consumption does go up, the oil companies will raise prices far beyond what is needed to produce a fair and equitable profit.

If the oil companies receive a dose of what they have been handing out they may think twice before again trying to gouge the consumer. And why not?

## Credit for Conviction

A few weeks ago, we published an editorial about our frustration with our entire legal system. This week, we received as an employer, an announcement from the Suffolk County Department of Labor about the availability of federal income tax credits for hiring employees from specific groups.

Some of these are legitimate: Viet Nam veterans, people on welfare, handicapped persons. But thrown in with these legitimate needs are ex-offenders, people who have been convicted within the past five years or released from prison. Somehow, in our perverted society, we have elevated the rights of convicted

## Readers' Opinion

Dear Mr. Willmott:

When 85 percent of the registered voters in the State of New York believe the issue of casino gaming legalization should be decided by the voters in a statewide referendum this fall, the Legislature should not "permanently suspend" consideration of the issue as Attorney-General Robert Abrams has recently suggested.

Rather, our representatives in Albany should reflect the will of the people by addressing the issue, creating the best legislation possible, and putting the matter to a popular vote.

According to a statewide poll conducted by Century Opinion Polls, Inc., for the Coalition for Casino Gaming, even 60 percent of those opposed to legalizing casinos in the state want a referendum on casino legalization.

The economic destiny of the State of New York is at stake and the last ones who should be excluded from determining its course are the people who live and work in New York.

The Legislature must realize its responsibility to all New Yorkers and let the people decide whether casino gaming is legalized in New York State.

Sincerely,  
Vito J. Pitta  
President  
New York State Hotel and  
Motel Trades Council (AFL-CIO)

Dear Mr. Willmott:

When one reads of the attempted assassination of Pope John Paul, one wonders if we, as a civilization, are not bordering on insanity. We have tried our darndest to not get along with each other. All we can show for our efforts are wars, holocausts, killings, murders, rapes, terrorism, corruption, robberies, starvation, greed, dope, drugs, muggings and general unhappiness within our own society. It has not worked!

Now let's try it his way for a change, by getting along with each other regardless of race, color or religion and bring Pope John Paul's dream of peace on earth and goodwill to all mankind into being -- and see how it works, before it's too late. If this does not work then I say, "Let's stop the world and get off!"

Jerry Kelly  
Bayport

Dear Mr. Willmott:

I couldn't agree more with the article in your May 27 issue, titled "Very Serious Mistake."

My question is, why can't LILCO be forced to issue bonds to cover overrun costs on Shoreham? Hasn't any taxpayer organization ever proposed this?

Yours respectfully,  
E.C. Geist  
Lake Ronkonkoma

USPS 098-300

# SUFFOLK LIFE

NEWSPAPERS

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and Suffolk County Life

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## Remember Him While You Can

This Sunday is Father's Day and it is the first Father's Day I won't have a father alive to honor. For those of you who do, please try to learn what I have learned the hard way.

Remember, give him flowers while he can still smell them. Talk to him when he can still hear. Touch him when he can still feel. Don't put off saying the things that need to be said, or asking for an opinion that you don't want to hear.

Remember, he is only human. He has probably tried as hard as he could. He may have erred, but for

reasons you will never understand. You may think of him as God, but don't put him on a pedestal that makes him unreachable.

Fathers have a great capacity for giving and a small capacity for receiving. But even the most hardened man of the mountain likes to know that what he has done has been appreciated, what he has failed to do is understood, but most of all that he is perceived as a man.

Remember your day in your own way while you can.

And why not?

## Politicking On Our Time

Last Wednesday, our managing editor, Lou Grasso, tried to track down Reilly McNeil, the Southampton Republican leader, to find out why the Southampton convention was to be closed to the public that night. A call from our editor to the Office of Emergency Preparedness revealed that Mr. McNeil was out East, "inspecting bomb shelters." This conversation was confirmed by the director of that department, William Regan. He said, "I just heard him on the radio. He's out there!"

When asked where he was specifically, Mr. Regan recommended that we check with Mr. Bennett, who is in charge of the chart for the day. Mr. Bennett could not give Mr. McNeil's whereabouts either. He told our editor that normally the employees of that office fill out the chart on where they have been after they have been there. Failing to find Mr. McNeil, we attempted to find Mr. Michael Marzullo, an inspector with the Suffolk County Department of Consumer Affairs. The office he works for could not tell us where he was.

By chance we sent one of our reporter-photographers to Gary Weber's office in East Quogue. Weber is a leader of the opposition to incumbent Southampton Supervisor Martin Lang. Lo and behold, parked in front of Mr. Weber's office were Mr. Marzullo's Cadillac and Mr.

McNeil's county car. This was at 4 p.m., at a time when both men should have been legitimately working for the county.

The indiscretion by these men and their abuse of the taxpayers' money brings up the question of how much time county employees actually put in on county business. How much time do they charge off to the county that they are spending on personal business? Are they legitimately allowed to use county vehicles when pursuing personal interests, or is the use of a county vehicle strictly limited to county business? What are the penalties for abusing county time or misusing county equipment? Does the County Executive have a firm policy that all employees understand? If there is such a policy, is it enforced?

Peter Cohalan ran on a platform of reforming not only the Republican party, but the abuses within the county. Big scandals start as little scandals and the only way we know to deal with them is by being forceful, uniform and consistent. We think the County Executive's office should look into where these two employees of the County Executive's office were, what they were doing and on whose time. If they took an unauthorized leave or used cars illegally, then they should pay the penalty the same as anyone else who disobeys county policy. And why not?

## Political Arrogance

There is some question as to whom will emerge as the winner of the Southampton Town Republican designating convention held last Wednesday evening. While Albert Essay garnered the most votes at the convention, Supervisor Martin Lang has filed a lawsuit claiming that a number of the committeemen who voted were never formally approved by the County Republican organization, as required.

There is no doubt, however, as to whom the losers were: the public came out second best as a result of the decision by the Southampton Town GOP's Executive Board that the convention be closed to the public and the press.

We don't know of another political convention in any town of Suffolk County that was held behind closed doors. Designating conventions produce the candidates who seek to hold public office. In our mind, any candidate who would support the barring of both press and public from the convention happenings would also be apt to handle the government's business in smoke-filled back rooms. The public must surely wonder why any potential candidate, or political leader, or committeeman -- who is supposedly a representative of the

rank-and-file Republican voters -- should fear public scrutiny of his or her actions. And when charges are made after a closed convention is held that illegal votes were cast, we must surely wonder what else went on behind those doors.

Those who decided that the Southampton Town GOP convention should be held behind closed doors displayed a public-be-damned attitude that should not go unchallenged. If government is to be open and responsive to the needs and desires of its people, it will not come about through closed-door attitudes of those who barred the public and the press. That kind of "we know what's best for you" philosophy, carried into the workings of government, can spell out the ruination of Southampton Town, as it has in other towns before, such as in Brookhaven, where raw political power reigned for many years and politicians were enriched at the expense of the public.

Open, above-board, honest dealings in the spotlight of public scrutiny. Or, behind closed doors where deals can be made and personal interests can be advanced. What about it, Southampton Republicans? Which is your preference?

And why not?

## Thank You, Jeff

Journalism at the weekly level is a field that draws the most dedicated people we have ever met. One of Suffolk Life's greatest assets is the wonderful staff that makes it happen, week after week. There's always the pressure of deadlines, the workload that never seems to end, the frustration of being wedged by the pressures of time, so much that the things we'd like to do to make this publication even better are often shunted aside by the realities of deadline limitations.

Every so often, however, something happens that makes us stop and take notice of the extra effort being applied. Last week the Press Club of Long Island, in its first annual Media Awards Contest, paid tribute to one of our staff members for a series of articles concerning the 1980 census snafu. And we are as proud as punch.

The Press Club awarded Jeff

Sievers, staff reporter who covers the Riverhead and North Fork editions of Suffolk Life in particular, and who is involved in other coverage as well, with the James Murphy Memorial Cub Reporter of the Year award, given to a reporter with less than one year's experience. The competition was tough and included reporters from many weekly and daily newspapers.

Jeff was matured in the role of journalist in the short length of time he has been involved in his chosen field of endeavor. We are thrilled that his efforts and his abilities have earned the recognition of his peers, for we know the dedication he puts into his work.

As proud as we are of our entire staff, we're particularly proud of Jeff Sievers and his accomplishment.

And why not?

## Readers' Opinion

Dear Mr. Willmott:

The letter from Allen Zegel in the May 27 issue of Suffolk Life has caused a great deal of problems. Since Mr. Zegel's letter appeared, a whole host of individuals have asked me to appoint them to the Long Island Regional Planning Board. Why?

Well, Mr. Zegel alleged that the post pays \$50,000 a year, and criticized me for appointing former County Executive John V.N. Klein to this position.

John Klein was appointed to the Long Island Regional Planning Board, but the position is unsalaried.

Mr. Klein's appointment was based on his familiarity with Long Island and his long-time interest in land use policies. We will all benefit from his expertise in the planning field. He receives no salary for his work with the planning board.

For all those people who have applied for this so-called \$50,000 a year position, don't blame me, blame Mr. Zegel. Mr. Zegel should get his facts straight before he shoots from the lip.

Sincerely yours,  
Peter F. Cohalan  
Suffolk County Executive

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# Willmotts and Why-Nots

David J. Willmott, Editor

## Changes Worth Considering

There are two laws being considered that would affect drinking habits.

The first proposal is a local law affecting Nassau and Suffolk Counties, rolling back the hours until which bars may stay open from 3 a.m. to 2 a.m. during the week and from 4 a.m. to 3 a.m. on Saturday night (Sunday morning). There isn't a police officer in Suffolk County who can't tell you a horror story he has been involved in during the hour after bars were legally closed and people who had no business driving got behind the steering wheels of cars. No one seems quite sure how much of a difference a change in the closing hours of bars is going to make, but the consensus of those who are involved with the bloody business of scraping bodies off pavements is that it's worth a try.

It is a fact the longer the bars are open, the longer people tend to party. The more they party, the more drunk they become. Over the last few years a phenomenon has taken place with our young people. Instead of going out early evening and returning home around midnight, youths today leave their homes after 9 p.m. and return home as the sun rises. As this change in society has taken place, so have the statistics of those involved in accidents late at night.

Block Island used to be an all-night party island. Most of the trouble the local population had and the police had to deal with happened between 1 a.m. and 4 p.m. A couple of years ago, the hours that bars closed rolled back to 1 a.m. The problems have been less severe and easier to manage. Whether a rollback of one hour in the legal closing time of bars here will help remains to be seen. It is worth a try if it just saves one life.

A second law being considered is changing the age a person can legally drink from 18 to 19. New York has allowed teenagers to drink legally at 18 even when many neighboring states set the limit at 21. We could see little difference between 18 and 19 until a friend of ours who owns a bar

patronized by young adults brought to our attention the problem he has in controlling underage drinkers.

He pointed out that at 19 few kids are still in high school, whereas at 18, almost the entire senior class is in school and the freshmen, sophomores and juniors are trying to emulate them and want to be where they are. Once kids are out of school there is a break in the peer group. He feels, and we agree, that if young adults were not allowed to legally go to bars until their 19th birthday, many of the 13-, 14- and 15-year-olds would be prevented from getting into bars also.

What few of us realize or even want to consider is that alcohol is a deadly drug. It not only deadens the brain on the short haul but it is horribly addictive in the long run. Colin Campbell of the Long Island Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse states that alcohol is far more addictive than heroin. In fact, heroin used to be given as a substitute for alcohol in trying to wean someone from the habit.

Alcoholism today is not limited to the Bowery bum. It affects rich and poor, white and black, young and old. One only has to visit an alcoholic ward in a hospital to realize the paralyzing affect this legal drug has on people. Thirteen- and 14-year-old girls sit babbling incoherently alongside a grandmotherly schoolteacher. The bank president sweats profusely alongside a laborer paralyzed with the shakes.

An 18-year-old legal drinking age is an invitation for kids 14 and 15 to start. If the legal drinking age is raised to 19, it will be much more difficult for youths to pass themselves off as being older or obtain illegal false proof of their age. There will be less peer pressure, the cause of most youths drinking.

We think both these alcohol-related measures deserve serious consideration. There are enough positive arguments for their passage. If these laws fail to achieve their intended goal, they can always be repealed.

And why not?

## Need for Primaries

Committeemanship is the very basis of the entire political system here in America.

A political committee member is a conduit between the registered rank-and-file of the district and the leadership of the political party. Anyone who is registered in a political party can be a committee member.

Every other year, we hold elections for the position of committeeman. During the odd years, Republicans select theirs. During the even years, the Democrats do likewise. This editorial is written for those who are registered in the Republican party, for this is the year you can be elected a Republican committeeman to represent your own district.

All that you need to become a committee member is a genuine

interest and a desire to mold and form the government which you operate under. All committee members here in Suffolk County are also county committee members. They are elected or appointed to represent an election district, normally the district in which the committee man lives.

One of the primary functions of a Committee member is to know all the registered voters within his election district and for them to know him. On a regular, systematic basis, a committeeman is charged with the responsibility of discussing with his constituents - his neighbors - their views on various issues and who they would like to see as nominees for their party.

If you are registered in a political party and do not know the name of the

committeeman who represents your district, you have an ineffective and poor committeeman. Chances are he is a hack who was never elected to serve the district, who was appointed by a boss to do the boss's bidding and ignore the rank-and-file's beliefs. This hack most likely has a job that he received through the graces of the leader. If he doesn't have a job, his spouse probably does, or one of their children, and as a result, they are beholden to this person for their financial existence.

Committee memberships are the foundation of a political organization. They also are the foundation of good government, when committee members are elected and are the choice of the rank-and-file from that district. If you are unhappy about the way government is run, the taxes you pay, or the quality of people who are nominated to be the candidates from your party, we seriously recommend that you think about and explore the possibility of becoming a committee member yourself.

The procedure is relatively simple. The first place to start is to call the county Republican committee in Blue Point, at GR 5-2300. Express your desire to be a committee member. They will tell you who the member is for the district you live in. They will also give you the name of your town leader. You can make your availability as a candidate known to this person and if a vacancy does exist, they may recommend you for appointment. If a vacancy does not exist or the leader prefers to have someone whom he can control in this position, you may challenge his choice by securing a petition from the Board of Elections on which you will be required to secure a minimum of 5 percent of the signatures within your district stating your primary

challenge for the committee position. 5 percent of the voters is normally less than 25 people.

You then file this petition with the Board of Elections and, when certified, your name will appear on the ballot in September. You can send a letter to all the registered people within your party in the district announcing your candidacy or, better yet, you can go from door to door introducing yourself in person, explaining to the registered voters what your concept of committee membership is, your desire to be a member and your willingness to solicit their views in the future on politics, policy and candidates and the conveying of this information to the committee.

Chances are your fellow registered voters, like you, have never heard from a committeeman before. They will appreciate the opportunity of knowing who their committeeman is and working with him, and therefore will support your candidacy in September.

Your victory will give you an opportunity to play a very dramatic and real part in grassroots politics. You will be in a position to help develop the beliefs, the strategies and the candidates of your party, on the town, the county and the national level.

The time needed to be a good Committeeman is minimal. The experience that will develop from it will be rewarding. The most rewarding aspect of it is knowing that you have played an important part in making your community, your county and your state a better place because you cared and you were involved.

Why not think about it? Why not do it? It sure as heck beats complaining and feeling frustrated because no one appears to be listening. And why not?

## Readers' Opinion

Dear Mr. Willmott:

My son will be graduating in a few days. Unlike many children he will not comprehend that this first, so rewarding year there is also his last. For he attended the BOCES Pre-kindergarten program.

During this year we, his entire family shared with him a most remarkable journey that has so well prepared him for his future school years and enlightened him to a wonderful world of education that now he is so eager to begin. I feel secure that will benefit to his new school and teachers to be.

Thank you BOCES, all the dedicated teachers and staff, to Brookhaven Township and New York State for making this success story happen and many others for the past thirteen years. I wish you well. And why not?

Sincerely,  
Therese K. Winters.

Dear Mr. Willmott:

The Thompson family would like to thank all of the friends we know and the friends we don't know for your prayers and gifts for Dustin.

We would also like to say a special thank-you to: RAPA (Riley Avenue Parents Association) for all their time and efforts; Grace and Paul Gotimer for always being there; Jeff Sievers for becoming a friend; and three very special people who donate their gift of life to Dustin every week, his blood brothers, Pete Irving, Linda Chauncey and John Richter.

Terry and Bill Thompson

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